

THE SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS



MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 2013

Romans 12:1; Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. (NIV)

LIVING SACRIFICES
By Evangelist Dennis A. Palma

Heavenly Father, Lord Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, we thank You, praise You, bless You, and love Lord, for never leaving or forsaking us. Father God, as we draw closer to You, You draw closer to us. When life brings us down, You pick us up Lord. When the world become dark and evil is all around, Your Divine Light shines through the darkness. Abba Father, thanks for loving us the way You do. Lord, thanks for caring and sharing Your Infinite Will with Your people. Father, may we all draw closer to Your Divine Presence. Father God, I ask this prayer in the name of Your Son and our Savior, Lord Jesus Christ, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Amen!

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This month's inspired journal has to do with, living sacrifices. When I say, living sacrifices, what is the first thing that comes in to your mind? The word sacrifice means an act of slaughtering an animal or person or surrendering a possession as an offering to God or to a divine or supernatural figure. In the Old Testament, when sacrificing an animal according to God's law, a priest, would kill the animal, cut it in pieces, and place it on an altar. Sacrifice, was important, but even in the Old Testament, God made it clear that obedience from the heart was much more important (see **1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6; Amos 5:21-24**). Also, throughout human history, the death of sacrificial animals gave evidence that the forgiveness of sin requires the shedding of blood. In **Hebrews 9:22** it is written; **In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.** Why did forgiveness of sin require the shedding of blood? This is no arbitrary decree on the part of a blood thirsty God, as some have suggested. There is no greater symbol of life than blood; blood keeps us alive. Jesus shed His blood –gave His life— for our sins so that we wouldn't have to experience spiritual death, and eternal separation from God. Jesus sacrifice on the cross, demonstrated His unconditional love!

How does Jesus blood purify us from every sin? In the Old Testament times, believers symbolically transferred their sins to an animal, which they then sacrificed. (See a description of this ceremony in **Leviticus 4.**)

The animal died in their place to pay for their sin and allowed them to keep living in God's favor. God graciously forgave them because of their faith in Him, and because they obeyed His commandments concerning the sacrifice. Those sacrifices anticipated the day when Christ would completely remove sin. Final cleansing from sin was when Jesus, "the Lamb of God, did take away the sins of the world." (**John 1:29**)

In the New Testament however, God wants us to offer ourselves, not animals, as *living sacrifices* daily laying aside our own daily desires to follow Him, putting all our energy and resources at His disposal and trusting Him to guide us. Why do we do this as believing Christians? We do this out of love, respect, obedience, and gratitude that our sins have been forgiven! God has good, pleasing, and perfect plans for His children. He wants us to be transformed people with a renewed mind, living to honor Him. Because He only wants what is best for us, and because He gave His only Son Jesus to make our new lives possible, we should joyfully give ourselves as living sacrifices for His service. Christians are called not to conform anymore to the pattern of this world," with all its secular behavior and customs that are usually selfish and often corrupting. Many Christians wisely decide that much worldly behavior is off limits for them. Our refusal to conform to this world's values, however, must go even deeper than the level of behavior and Customs,—it must be firmly planted in our minds—"be transformed by the renewing of our minds." However, it is possible to avoid most worldly customs and still be proud, covetous, selfish, stubborn, and arrogant. Only when the Holy Spirit renews, reeducates, and redirects our minds are we truly transformed. At that point of conversion, we are expected to become living sacrifices for God! Also, while the New Testament takes the language of sacrifice literally when applying it to Christ death, the same language is used metaphorically when applied to Christian living. Believers are to present themselves to God as *living sacrifices*.

It is written in **Romans 12:1**; **Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.** Try and remember that God is not asking us to physically offer up our bodies as a living sacrifice, because Christ already made the ultimate sacrifice on the cross, for our sins. God instead wants us to be living sacrifices for Him. How can we be a living sacrifice? By sincerely offering up our daily services, to the Lord. Also, by putting Christ first before anything else. Last but not least, God does not want us to make serving Him into a ritual, like going to church, taking communion, or paying tithes and so on. These activities by themselves are empty, if the reason for doing them are selfish and self centered!



JESUS LIVES

By Sarah Young

ABIDING IN HIM

I want you to live close to Me, seeing things from My perspective more and more. Walk as a child of light, for My radiance is all around you and also within you; it transforms you inside and out. Remember that you were once in darkness until My Spirit quickened you to Life, empowering you to live in My Holy Presence. Dwell on this blessed remembrance until gratitude for My glorious grace wells up within you.

Trust Me to lead you step by step through each day. I provide sufficient Light for only one day at a time. If you try to look into the future, you will find yourself peering in darkness: My Face shines upon you only in the present! This is where you find My gracious Love that never fails you. Live ever so near Me—flourishing in My transforming Light.



THE MINISTRY'S DAILY PRAYER LIST.

Please pray for; Joe Lakes, John Carlson, Denise Lathrop, Dennis E Palma, Jonathan Baker. Janelle Owens. Bill Schlupp, Ira Jones, and George Duetch. Furthermore, a prayer for the United States of America. A prayer that our country get's back to being one Nation under God again, before it's too late! For without God, there is no Nation! Amen.

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Until next month's journal, may the Lord richly bless you always!!

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